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of the synod between two letters of Zosimus dated September 22 and September 29. The second of these letters must be provoked by the mere tidings that the synod has opened discussion of the decretal of March. To escape a difficulty it has to be conjectured that another papal letter (*Quod de Proculi*, September 26) has erroneously received the date of the document enrolled just before it in the records of Arles.

To substantiate this construction, which seems to merit assent, Babut gives a very interesting and detailed account of the ecclesiastical conditions of Gaul in the fifth century, and promises a further work on Saint Martin of Tours. He will show that Martin narrowly escaped condemnation for Priscillian views and that Priscillian was only an ascetic pietist, the dogmatic heresies charged upon him being a false misrepresentation.

FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE.

*The Dark Ages.* By W. P. KER. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1904. Pp. x, 361.)

PROFESSOR KER, of University College, London, presents, under the special title of *The Dark Ages*, the first volume of a series of Periods of European Literature to be edited by Professor Saintsbury. As in duty bound, he begins with an attempt to define this much-abused term. He devotes to this his first two chapters, nearly a quarter of the whole little volume. Chronologically he limits his period by the decline of Roman culture on the one hand and the year 1100 on the other. These limits include, so we are told, the migration of the Teutonic peoples, of which Mr. Ker regards the Norman conquest of England as the last wave. He does not mention the Norman occupation of southern Italy, and why the Norman conquest of England is any more a piece of the Teutonic migration than the later and vaster expansion of Teutonic life in the lands eastward from the Elbe is not clear. However, periods must end somewhere, if only for the convenience of the literary historian, and if we must have a "dark" time, we are not disposed to quarrel with Mr. Ker's thesis that with the beginning of the twelfth century a new light is visible both in the subjects and the methods of literary treatment. In the second chapter, "The Elements", we are given a general survey of the whole period with reference specially to the material utilized in literature. The main body of the volume is then divided into two parts, treating respectively the "Latin Authors" and "The Teutonic Languages"; and a short final chapter on the literature of Ireland and Wales completes what is at best but a hasty survey of a vast field.

Of Mr. Ker's scholarly equipment for his task there can be no doubt. The whole volume bristles with "reading". There are enough learned references here to challenge the literary expert at every turn. Indeed, we can hardly see how any one can understand this book to whom the things it deals with are not already perfectly familiar. To such a one it offers a somewhat confused résumé of matters he should know

already. For the young student it is far too abstruse, and for the general reader it lacks the unity and concentration which alone can command his attention. This failure to appeal to a definable audience is the more to be regretted because Mr. Ker shows us at times that he is capable of straightforward and vivid characterization. For example his treatment of the Monk of St. Gall and the nun Hrotsuit gives us really valuable little sketches of important works. The same might have been said of his sketch of Liutprand of Cremona were it not that in the five pages (180-185) devoted to this author we have no less than sixteen literary allusions, every one of which would tax the learning of an adept in comparative literature. Mr. Ker's bane is fine writing; he has a certain sense of humor that now and then is useful, but it leads him into long ways around where directness and compactness are prime necessities. He is not willing merely to tell us about literature; he must still be making literature himself. It is true that reading about literature is generally dreary work enough, but this is all the more reason why the literary historian should suppress himself to the last degree and furnish us mainly with illustrations from his authors of the ideas he is seeking to make clear.

E. E.

*A History of Mediæval Political Theory in the West.* By R. W. CARLYLE and A. J. CARLYLE. Volume I. *The Second Century to the Ninth.* By A. J. CARLYLE, M.A. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons. 1903. Pp. xvii, 314.)

THE object of the joint authors of the present work is to carry in several volumes the history of political theory down to the early seventeenth century—"that is the time when, as it is thought, the specific characteristics of modern political theory began to take shape". It is to be strictly a "history of theory, not of institutions", though the authors "have frequently been compelled to examine the institutions in order to draw out more clearly the character of the theories which were actually current among those who reflected on the nature of political life".

The author of the present volume has brought to his work a thorough knowledge of the early church writers—certainly a necessary qualification for the period of which he treats—and has succeeded in expressing himself in such admirable and lucid English, free from all philosophical abstractions and obscurities, that at no time does his exposition fail to instruct and to interest the reader. This clearness is largely due to the admirable arrangement of the subject-matter and to the method of treatment, for the author deals not with theorists, but with theories. To some, no doubt, such a method will be unacceptable because it involves a certain amount of repetition and does not permit the reader, without some labor on his own account, to find the complete political system of any one of the writers referred to. The method